

Message Text

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CHEROKEE

FOR THE SECRETARY FROM AMBASSADOR

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, EG, US

SUBJ: MEETING WITH FAHMY

REF STATE 1549,

SUMMARY: AFTER TELLING FAHMY YESTERDAY THAT I HAD BEEN CALLED BACK ON CONSULTATION AND ASKING IF HE HAD ANY MESSAGES HE WISHED CONVEYED TO NEW ADMINISTRATION, HE MADE SEVERAL GENERAL POINTS: PRES-ELECT CARTER AND SADAT SHOULD MEET AS EARLY AS POSSIBLE SOMEWHERE IN EUROPE AND ME PEACE PROCESS MUST MOVE IN 1977. HOW MUCH IT CAN MOVE REMAINS UNCERTAIN. WITHOUT SOME MOVEMENT, HOWEVER, SOVIET POSITION IN ME AREA WILL INEVITABLY BE STRENGTHENED. WE SHOULD NOT UNDER-ESTIMATE SOVIET DETERMINATION STRENGTHEN ITS INFLUENCE IN STRATEGIC GEOGRAPHIC AREAS OF THE WORLD. IF THERE IS NO MOVE ON ME PEACE PROCESS EARLY IN 1977, GOE WILL HAVE TO TAKE ISSUE TO UNSC IF FOR NO OTHER REASON THAN THE FACT THAT SADAT'S SPATE OF OPTIMISTIC STATEMENTS HAD LED TO PUBLIC EXPECTATIONS. WE SHOULD ASK ISRAELIS TO STOP PROVOCATIVE ACTIONS SUCH AS AMOCO RGI INCIDENT AND RECENT ISRAELI DRONE INTRUSION INTO
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EGYPTIAN TERRITORY. CURRENT LARGE-SCALE IDF MANEUVERS IN SINAI ARE SIMILAR TO ISRAELI PRE-OCT 1973 ACTIVITIES AND, AS RESULT, BOTH ARMIES ARE ON FULL ALERT. PALESTINIAN PROBLEM IS THE CORE OF THE ME ISSUE AND NEW ADMINISTRATION SHOULD TAKE NEW LOOK AT THE NEED FOR A DIALOGUE WITH PLO. FINALLY, NEW ADMINISTRATION SHOULD TAKE "BOLD DECISION" AND BE WILLING TO PROVIDE EGYPT WITH SOME MODEST QUANTITIES OF DEFENSIVE

WEAPONS. DOING SO WOULD IN NO WAY CHANGE BALANCE OF POWER.
END SUMMARY

1. MET WITH FAHMY YESTERDAY AFTERNOON AND ADVISED HIM THAT I HAVE BEEN CALLED BACK ON CONSULTATIONS WITH THE SECRETARY AND THE SEC-DESIGNATE. IF HE HAD ANY MESSAGES HE WISHED CONVEYED TO THE NEW ADMINISTRATION, I WOULD BE PLEASED TO TAKE THEM. I WOULD PROBABLY ALSO BE BRINGING BACK AN ORAL MESSAGE.

2. MIDDLE EAST PEACE PROCESS: FAHMY SAID HE WELCOMED MY TRIP BACK. IN HIS JUDGMENT, PRES-ELECT CARTER AND SADAT SHOULD MEET "AS EARLY AS POSSIBLE SOMEWHERE IN EUROPE." HE RECALLED HOW VALUABLE THE FORD-SADAT MEETING IN SALZBURG HAD BEEN. PRES-ELECT CARTER SHOULD ALSO MEET LEADERS OF THE ME AT THE SAME PLACE OR AT DIFFERENT PLACES. THE ME PEACE PROCESS, FAHMY EMPHASIZED, MUST MOVE IN 1977. TO WHAT EXTENT IT CAN MOVE, NO ONE KNOWS.

3. THE SOVIET FACTOR: WITHOUT ANY MOVEMENT, HOWEVER, THE SOVIET POSITION IN THE AREA WILL INEVITABLY AGAIN BE STRENGTHENED. IT MAY BE TRUE THAT THE SOVIETS WANT DETENTE WITH THE US IN MATTERS SUCH AS SALT. IT SHOULD BE CLEAR, NEVERTHELESS, THAT IN THE GEOGRAPHIC REGIONS OF THE WORLD, THEY ARE ACTIVELY SEEKING TO STRENGTHEN THEIR INTERESTS AS AGAINST THOSE OF THE UNITED STATES. ANGOLA, IRAQ, LIBYA ARE CASES IN POINT. SO IS BREZHNEV'S UPCOMING TRIP TO AFRICA. THE NEW ADMINISTRATION SHOULD NOT MINIMIZE THE "POLITICAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL IMPACT" OF A VISIT BY BREZHNEV
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ON THE ARABS AND AFRICANS. BREZHNEV'S VISIT WILL BE INTERPRETED BY MANY AFRICANS AS "I AM HERE, THE US IS OUT." FAHMY HOPED THAT THE NEW ADMINISTRATION WILL RECOGNIZE THAT THE GOE IS SERIOUS ABOUT THE NEED TO MOVE ON THE ME PEACE PROCESS EARLY IN 1977. IF THERE IS NO MOVEMENT, GOE WILL HAVE TO TAKE THE ISSUE TO THE UNSC. SADAT'S SPATE OF "OPTIMISTIC STATEMENTS" ABOUT HAVING A SOLUTION IN 1977 MAKES IT MANDATORY FOR GOE TO SEE TO IT THAT SOMETHING SIGNIFICANT TAKES PLACE.

4. ISRAELI PROVOCTIONS: AS A SECOND POINT, FAHMY ASKED THAT WE TELL THE ISRAELIS NOT TO MAKE THINGS DIFFICULT AND TRY TO PROVOKE THE GOE INTO SOME KIND OF REACTION. HE MENTIONED TWO EXAMPLES. FIRST WAS THE AMOCO RIG INCIDENT. THIS SHOULD BE SPEEDILY SETTLED. SECOND WAS THE RECENT INTRUSION OF AN ISRAELI DRONE INTO EGYPTIAN TERRITORY (76 CAIRO 17914). THIS INTRUSION HAD TAKEN PLACE JUST BEFORE THE CURRENT IDF MANEUVERS IN SINAI, THE LARGEST YET HELD. IF WE HAD ANY DOUBTS ABOUT THE EGYPTIAN VERSION, WE WERE

WELCOME TO SEE THE AIR DEFENSE OF THE OVER-FLIGHT. IT WAS ALL RECORDED. HAD THE DRONE NOT CHANGED COURSE WHEN IT DID, JUST BEFORE MANSOURA, IT WOULD HAVE BEEN ENGAGED. IN FACT, THE SECTOR AIR DEFENSE COMMANDER IS CURRENTLY UNDER COURT MARTIAL FOR HAVING FAILED TO ENGAGE THE UNIDENTIFIED AIRCRAFT. AS HE HAD TOLD ME, THE EGYPTIANS HAD COUNTERED BY SENDING TWO MIG'S INTO THE SINAI. THERE HAD BEEN NO ISRAELI RESPONSE. FAHMY ATTRIBUTED THIS TO THE FACT THAT THE ISRAELIS WERE AWARE THAT EIGHT EGYPTIAN MIRAGES HAD BEEN DEPLOYED OVER SINAI ON THE SAME DAY TO ENGAGE ANY ISRAELI AIRCRAFT THAT MIGHT SCRAMBLE. THE ISRAELIS ARE PLAYING CAT AND MOUSE TACTICS, ACCORDING TO FAHMY, AND SHOULD STOP. IF THEY ARE SERIOUS ABOUT PEACE, BOTH ISRAELIS AND EGYPTIANS SHOULD ACT DIFFERENTLY TOWARD EACH OTHER. HE LIKENED CURRENT IDF MANEUVERS IN SINAI TO PRE-OCT, 1973 ISRAELI ACTIONS AND NOTED THAT, AS A RESULT, BOTH ARMIES ARE NOW ON FULL ALERT STATUS. IF THE ISRAELIS DELIBERATELY SEEK TO CREATE
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PROBLEMS, USG SHOULD TELL THEM TO STOP. IF USG UNABLE TO DO SO, IT RAISES THE QUESTION OF WHETHER WE HAVE ANY ROLE IN THE OVER-ALL PROCESS. FAHMY AGAIN LAMENTED THE FACT THAT WE ARE PROVIDING LARGE QUANTITIES OF ARMS AND ECONOMIC AID TO ISRAEL. THIS, IN HIS JUDGMENT, WILL ONLY MAKE ISRAEL MORE INFLEXIBLE.

5. DIALOGUE WITH PLO: THIRD POINT MADE BY FAHMY WAS THAT WE SHOULD UNDERTAKE A DIALOGUE WITH THE PLO. WHETHER WE LIKE IT OR NOT, THE PLO REPRESENTS THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE. HUSSEIN CANNOT DO SO. THE PLO, AND ESPECIALLY FATAH, HAS PROVEN HELPFUL TO US IN THE PAST. HE SPECIFICALLY MENTIONED THE TWO BEIRUT EVACUATIONS WHEN WE HAD APPEALED TO SADAT TO INTERVENE WITH THE PLO IN ORDER TO INSURE A SAFE EVACUATION. SADAT HAD DONE SO AND THE PLO HAD COOPERATED FULLY. THE PALESTINIAN PROBLEM, HE REITERATED, IS THE CORE OF THE ISSUE AND HE HOPED THE NEW ADMINISTRATION WOULD TAKE A NEW LOOK AT THE NEED FOR A DIALOGUE WITH THE PLO.

6. US ARMS: FOURTH POINT MADE BY FAHMY WAS GOE'S NEED FOR SOME ARMS. THE NEW ADMINISTRATION SHOULD TAKE A "BOLD DECISION" AND BE WILLING TO PROVIDE EGYPT WITH MODEST QUANTITIES OF DEFENSIVE ARMS. IF WE MEAN WHAT WE SAY ABOUT STRENGTHENING SADAT'S LEADERSHIP IN THE ARAB WORLD, AS AN ESSENTIAL FACTOR IN THE ME PEACE PROCESS, WE SHOULD BE WILLING TO ASSIST IN THE ARMS FIELD AS WELL. AS WE KNEW FROM PAST DISCUSSIONS, GOE IS NOT LOOKING FOR WEAPONS WHICH WILL CHANGE THE BALANCE OF POWER. ITS SOLE INTEREST IS IN DEFENSIVE WEAPONS, SUCH AS THE F-5E AND THE TOW MISSILE. FAILURE TO PROVIDE THEM ONLY INCREASES INTERNAL PRESSURES IN EGYPT TO NORMALIZE RELATIONS WITH THE SOVIETS AS A MEANS OF OB-

TAINING NEEDED WEAPONS. THE RECENT ARMS OFFER TO ISRAEL,
INCLUDING F-16'S AND PROPANE BOMBS, HAD GREATLY EXERCISED
THE EGYPTIAN MILITARY. IT HAD PROMPTED GAMASY TO SUBMIT TO
THE PRESIDENT AN ASSESSMENT OF COMPARATIVE EGYPTIAN/ISRAELI
FUTURE MILITARY CAPABILITIES AND THE URGENT NEED FOR GOE TO
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TAKE STEPS TO ACQUIRE MEANS OF COUNTERING THESE WEAPONS
SYSTEMS. WE HAD TOLD GOE THESE NEW ARMS WOULD NOT BE AVAIL-
ABLE FOR SOME YEARS, BUT FAHMY ARGUED THIS DOES NOT LESSEN
THE SERIOUSNESS OF THE PROBLEM FOR EGYPTIAN PLANNERS.
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